THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Preliminary survey has been conducted for Zonal Office at Hubli. Action plan is being made.

Modification of Platform at Hubli

734. SHRI S. R. BOMMAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that no steps have been taken to restructure the Railway Platforms after conversion of the track between Bangalore and Hubli into broad gauge even after three years, with the result that thousands of passengers are put to inconvenience every day;

(b) whether, Government would initiate steps to modify the platform at Hubli Railway Station, to suit the broad gauge trains; and

(c) if so, any time frame which has been fixed for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Platform Nos. 3 & 4 at Hubli railway station are already high level. The Work of raising of platform Nos. 1 & 2 from low level at present to high level has been sanctioned at a cost of Rs. 14 lakhs and the work has been awarded for execution. The likely date of completion is June, 2002.

Great Himalayan Quake

735. PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY:
SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, Great Himalayan Quake waiting to happen: Indo-US Expert, appearing in the Indian Express of 24th August, 2001;

(b) if so, whether any assessment has been made on the basis of this report; and

(c) if so, what precautions are being taken to meet such an untoward situation and making the public aware?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Government has studied the news item which appeared in the Indian Express of 24th August, 2001.

The above mentioned news item reiterates the risk of an impending earthquake in Himalaya which is also confirmed by independent studies commissioned/undertaken by the Department of Science and Technology from time to time. It is appropriate to mention that this region falls under Zone IV and V (high and very high damage risk zones) of the Seismic Zoning Map of India prepared by the Bureau of Indian Standards (IS: 1893:1984). Zone-V is broadly associated with earthquakes of intensity IX and above in the Modified Mercalli Scale and Zone IV with intensity VIII and above.

Keeping in view of the vulnerability of this region, the Government has got conducted several seismological and other collateral geophysical studies for the past two decades to better understand the earthquake phenomena and geophysical character of various geological faults and thrusts zones in the Himalayan region. The seismological observatory network in this region has been recently upgraded with state-of-the-art instrumentation, data retrieval, processing and analysis. Also, action has been initiated to establish a dense network of observatories in a phased manner. Besides, to enhance the research capabilities in the field of earthquake studies, several research projects have been supported in various institutes like: University of Roorkee, Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, National Geophysical Research Institute and several other organizations.

The inputs of these studies are provided to State Governments local Governments and other community based organizations to enable them to better prepared and aware of the risks. Bureau of Indian Standards has formulated certain codes of building design and construction practice which, if strictly followed, will ensure substantial

reduction in damage to structures and loss of lives in the event of an earthquake. Several steps have also been initiated for public awareness through multilingual posters and other methods of information dissemination, including the creation of appropriate data bases and making available digital tools and technologies such as GIS for improved planning for earthquake related disasters.

Herbs in Himachal Pradesh Forests

†736. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any research regarding availability of herbs in the forest and hilly areas of Himachal Pradesh has been conducted; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, Some Central Ministries/ Departments/Institutes (Department of Biotechnology, Department of Indian System of Medicine and Homoeopathy, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Ministry of Environment and Forests and Universities) are implementing several research and development projects regarding availability of herbs in the forest and hilly areas of different States in the country including Himachal Pradesh.

The Department of Biotechnology has set up three national gene banks at the Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP), Lucknow, National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR), New Delhi and Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (TBGRI), Thiruvananthapuram for the collection, conservation and characterization of our precious wealth of medicinal and aromatic herbs which are rare/threatened/endangered or are

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.